

Some Notes upon the Development of the Commerce of Siam.

When we begin to consider the early trade of Siam we have to remember that away back beyond the time when actual evidence starts there lies a period of which we shall never know the history, and of which we can only venture to imagine something of the traffics and discoveries which were made.

We may imagine, not entirely without justification, that in that prehistoric time some degree of civilisation existed in this area: and we may add to that a further conjecture that foreign trade was carried on of a volume proportioned to the degree of civilisation, for it is one of the curious things about life that the more thoroughly a people engages itself in money-making — an engagement which, generally speaking, arouses almost the worst instincts of human nature — the more that people is progressing in the scale of civilisation.

We have very early evidence that there were trading relationships between neighbouring lands; and we know that such intercourse must have brought ships along the coasts of Siam. The evidence of the earliest trade between India and China is, of course uncertain. Kennedy, quoted by Sir William Hunter in his *History of British India*, "finds no positive evidence of an Indian sea-borne trade with Western Asia before 700 B. C." Hunter says: "The dawn of history discloses the Syrian trade-routes in the hands of Semitic races. The Chaldean or Babylonian merchants who brought up the Indian cargoes on the Persian Gulf, the half-nomad tribes who led the caravan from oasis to oasis around the margin of the central desert to Tyre or to the Nile, the Phœnician mariners who distributed the precious freights to the Mediterranean cities, were all of the Semitic type of mankind. The civilisation of ancient Egypt created the first great demand for the embalming spices, dyes, and fine products of the East. But as early as the fall of Troy (1184? B.C.), if we may still connect a date with the Æolic saga, Phœnician seamen had conveyed them northwards to Asia Minor and the Ægean Sea."

This early Indian trade is a fascinating subject, but it concerns us only for this reason — that there are grounds for supposing that concurrently with the Indian trade with the West there was Chinese trade with India. The Chinese junk of to-day is very little removed in appearance from the type of vessel which sailed from the ports of Phœnicia. The Phœnicians probably pushed their trade as far as Malaya. Hunter says that the ancient 'Tao coinage' or "Knife cash" of China has been ascribed to the sea traders from the Indian Ocean who, before 670 B. C., marked their bronze knives with distinctive symbols so as to convert them into a returnable currency.

Hunter also refers to an account, written about 535-547 A.D., of the trade with Malabar and the Eastern Archipelago, and the meeting of the sea traffic of Egypt and China in Ceylon.

Now it is claimed for Siam that her dominion extended as far as Johore. We may therefore assume that on the outward voyage in the N. E. monsoon the junks from China touched land with which the name of Siam has been connected. Furthermore, if the junks did not take the course outside Sumatra, and I think it very likely that they did not, they would, in beating up the Straits of Malacca, keep as far away as possible from the lee shore of Sumatra; and in all probability would put into a creek on the coast of the peninsula to water and take in fresh provisions before setting out on the long run to Ceylon. Such a creek might well have been on the coast of Kedah or on the island of Penang, whence they would have a favourable point to set their course so as to clear both Acheen Head and the Nicobars. I think it is highly probable that if there were any marketable commodities to be found along that coast, and anyone there prepared to do business, the Chinese, even of those days, would have been the last people to neglect the opportunity. Dye wood (sappan) and incense (gum-benzoin), may well have been loaded there. We have evidence of such trade later on on that coast.

But apart from this possible early connection with an all-sea trade route there were in existence land routes along which traffic between China and India may well have passed at a very early period. The shortest of these routes was that between Chumporn

and the Pak Chan river, but there were others starting from Chaiya, from Patiyu, and from Pran. Anderson, quoting Grævenveldt, mentions an "account in the history of the Liang dynasty (502-506) of a place called Tun-Sun, on the narrowest part of the Malay Peninsula, that was the terminus of a trade route across it from the East, and along which the commerce of India and China was carried in those days, to escape the journey round the peninsula. According to this Chinese account, the town was famous for a wine made from a tree." Thus early we have evidence of a trade in the famous nipa wine of Tenasserim, for where there was wine we may be sure there was traffic in it.

With this evidence to support us I think we are justified in believing that there was even earlier traffic across the peninsula. The Chinese navigator does not care to venture too far out from the land; and he would, therefore, try to avoid the open sea passage across the Bay of Bengal. Moreover, the full run from China to, say, Ceylon would have occupied almost six months; the return trip would have taken another six months, by which time the S. W. monsoon would have been changing; and there would have been very little time left in which to overhaul the junk, take in another cargo, get a much-needed rest, and yet catch the N. E. monsoon for the next voyage down from China. On the other hand, they would have run down from China to, say, Chumporn on the end of the N.E. monsoon, discharged their cargoes for carriage overland, and returned to China with the opening S. W. monsoon.

So much for conjectural traffic.

Bowring obtained from Wade, Chinese Secretary of the superintendency in China, an account of the relations between China and Siam: and it is in that account that we find the first actual evidence of the foreign traffic of Siam. The first allusion, in the Chinese records, is made in the period 303-416 A.D. The first record of a voyage to Siam comes in 608-621, when a Chinese officer of the Board of Works went to Siam. Could he have been going to settle a teak contract? In 1281-1366 tribute was sent to the Emperor of China. In 1386 a Chinese envoy was sent to Siam with thanks for 100 piculs of pepper and 100 piculs of sappan wood. In 1387 Siam

sent thirty elephants; and in 1389, 1700 piculs of sappan wood. In 1391 Siam obtained standards of the Chinese weights and measures.

Although the goods I have mentioned were not sent in the way of trade, but rather as tribute, it must be supposed that the ships which carried the tribute carried also some commercial cargo; and in 1403 there is a direct reference to a Siamese trader going ashore on the coast of Fuh Kien. In 1456 a Siamese envoy was sent to China to lodge a complaint about the plundering of a Siamese vessel by the Chams. The Chams were ordered to give compensation, but they retorted that they had merely paid back the Siamese in their own coin. In 1508 comes the first official record in the history of Siam of misdemeanour by the Customs, but it is to be observed that the offenders were not the Siamese, but the Chinese, the authorities at Canton having wrongfully levied duties on a Siamese ship which had been driven into port by stress of weather. In 1520 the collector of Customs at Canton lost his head, not figuratively but actually, for allowing one of his staff to trade with a Siamese ship. The laws against foreign trade are said to have been very strict at the time, but as ships with cargoes were voyaging back and fore it is only reasonable to suppose that there was some expectation of disposing of the cargoes; and probably the explanation is to be found in the general Eastern system of royal trading.

Records of trade intercourse with China continue until in 1722 it is found that the Emperor commanded the importation of 300,000 piculs of rice from Siam. Further cargoes were sent, and in the reign of the Emperor Yung Ching ninety-six Chinese sailors obtained permission not to return to China from Siam. From this I am disposed to think that the early Siamese trading ships were navigated by Chinese. We have records in the seventeenth century to support this view, and the Dutch treaty of 1664 contained a clause by which the King undertook not to employ Chinese sailors in his ships sailing to Japan.

In 1735 Siam asked that the restrictions upon the export of copper from China might be relaxed. The request was not granted. By this time the rice trade between China and Siam was well established, and in 1751 Chinese bringing up more than 2000 piculs of rice were rewarded with a mandarin button. If this rule had

remained in force some of our local Chinese friends would be more gloriously arrayed than the attendants at picture palaces.

In 1744 Chinese were permitted to build ships in Siam and to sail them to China for registration.

While this traffic was growing into a settled condition of commercial intercourse, trade was being opened up in other directions.

The first actual mention of a trading vessel in the China trade takes us back to 1403. There is a gap of nearly two centuries before a connection with Japan can be established. According to Satow, "The earliest extant record.....belongs to the year 1606, "when a letter was addressed by the Shôgun Iyeyasu to the King "of Siam containing a request that some muskets, and incense known "to us as 'eagle-wood,' might be furnished to him. But there is no "doubt that commercial intercourse had taken place even before this, "for the original passports granted to Japanese junks trading to "Siam, or rather to the Malay states of Ligor and Patani, then, as "now, forming a part of the Siamese Kingdom, are still in existence, "dated as far back as 1592."

In 1599 and again in 1602 a junk belonging to Patani visited Japan, having an envoy on board. There is proof that in 1604 a Japanese merchant was resident in Siam, and that junks passed back and fore on his business, and between 1609 and 1615 there are records of ships' passports having been issued to various Europeans for trade with Siam. One, dated 1614, was issued to the famous Will Adams, the first Englishman to settle in Japan.

Satow gives a long account of the early seventeenth century trouble with the Japanese merchants and settlers in Ayuthia. In this it is mentioned that in 1633 there was a Japanese fleet of over 300 vessels at Ayuthia.

It is clear that the Japanese connection with Siam's commerce must have been very powerful; and concurrently with this traffic of Japanese ships there was considerable trade between the two countries which was in the hands of the English and Dutch, who were well established in Japan by this time, and competing with the Japanese for the Siam trade.

In 1636 Japan was closed to foreign intercourse, but an exception was made in favour of the Chinese, and the Dutch and English were permitted to trade with Nakasaki under very restricted conditions. The trade with Siam collapsed, as far as its former participants were concerned. It passed into the hands of the Chinese.

The principal commodities exchanged appear to have been, from Siam:—ivory, sappan wood, gunpowder, camphor, European cloth, gum, deer skins, hides, and ray skins; and from Japan:—horses, cotton cloth, lacquer work, tea, porcelain, and copper.

The pioneer seamen of China and Japan were almost as great figures, in their way, as Marco Polo—who returned from China by way of Malacca in 1295—as Columbus, da Gama, d'Albuquerque, Davis, and Drake. I say "in their way" because I think it unlikely that either the Chinese or the Japanese were prompted by a desire for adventure or discovery to embark on the stormy and unknown seas. Their voyages were probably merely the natural result of venturing time by time a little further along the coasts of the China Sea, in search of trade. They do not seem to me to have shown anything like the courage of, for instance, Bartholomeu Dias, who rounded the Cape of Good Hope—the Cape of Torments, as he called it—in 1486 with two ships of 50 tons, and put back only because his men rebelled.

But these Eastern navigators played their part in the development of Siam's trade, and while they were doing so certain daring Western adventurers were opening up the connection between Europe and this part of the world.

The success of the efforts to reach the East by sailing round the Cape of Good Hope may be attributed to a great extent to the Papal Bulls of 1493, 1506, and 1514, by which the Pope very kindly portioned out the unknown world between the Spaniards and the Portuguese. As the Spaniards claimed the western half of the Atlantic the Portuguese were forced to the East. In 1497 Vasco da Gama left the Tagus, a week or two after John Cabot, sailing from Bristol, on his way as he thought to India, had discovered North America; and in 1498 da Gama had sailed across the Southern Indian Ocean and reached Calicut. Others followed, and soon the Portuguese had established themselves—the first European powers

in the East. In 1508, with the object of cutting off the Mohammedan trade between Malacca and the Egyptian ports, de Sequeira was sent to Malacca; and in 1511 d'Albuquerque captured and fortified the town.

From these days onwards until the nineteenth century the history of the Far Eastern trade is often a history of war also; and in the beginning it is a history of religious aggression as well. One wonders how far the militant missionary spirit of the West has been responsible for the existing hatreds. One wonders how far this country would have remained tolerant had the Western religious activities of the seventeenth century been successful. As human love is often but thinly divided from hatred, so it seems that the Christian religion, based on a gospel of love, has been singularly effective in arousing the worst passions of mankind.

The Portuguese were received peacefully in India. They found religious toleration; they were not long in establishing a reputation for licentiousness and cruelty which has rarely been equalled. The expedition of 1500 under Cabral carried, besides a powerful armament, eight Franciscan friars, eight chaplains, and a chaplain major. The first act of this militant mission was to seize an Arab ship outside Calicut and another vessel in the harbour. This very successfully paved the way to a commercial and religious activity carried on at the point of the sword. Tavernier gives an interesting picture of the active side of religious life as it had developed in Goa in the seventeenth century.

But to return to the subject of this paper; Anderson records that Tristan d'Acunha visited Tenasserim in 1516, and that in 1511 Fernandez was sent from Malacca by sea to Ayuthia, returning overland to Tenasserim. He also mentions "Antonio de Miranda de Azevedo, the second envoy sent by d'Albuquerque to Ayuthia, had as his companion Manuel Frageso, who went to report to d'Albuquerque on all matters, 'merchandise, dresses, and customs of the land, and of the latitude of the harbours.' They proceeded by sea in the first instance to Taranque, and thence by land with horses and draught-oxen to the city of Sião, and on their return they reported that the peninsula was very narrow on that side where the Chinese make their navigation, and that from thence it was only 'ten days' journey to the coast of Tenasserim, Trang, and Tavoy."

It is established that at this time there was trade between Tenasserim, Ayuthia, and the Malacca Straits in benzoin and lac. The records of traffic, through Tenasserim, between Siam and the West, extending as far as Bengal and Cape Guardafui, are fairly full; and it is certain that the Portuguese were not long in making use of their establishment at Malacca to take their share in the trade.

In 1516 Coelho was sent as an envoy to Ayuthia, and in the next year the Portuguese opened up trade with Patani. Anderson mentions that in 1538 there were three hundred Portuguese in the port.

Between 1563 and 1581 Caesar Frederick, of Venice, made a voyage to the East. He records that "there goeth another ship for the said Captaine of Malacca to Sion, to lade verzino" (Brazil wood). He also records the capture of the city of Sion by the king of Pegu in the year 1567. In the same account he mentions passing by sea near to the city of "Tenasari". "This city of right belongeth to the kingdom of Sion, which is situate on a great rivers side, which cometh out of the kingdom of Sion; and where this river runneth into the sea there is a village called Mergim, in whose harbour every yeere there lade some ships with Verzina, Nypa, and Benjamin, a few cloves, nutmegs and maces which come from the coast of Sion, but the greatest merchandise there is Verzin and Nypa, which is an excellent wine, which is made from the floure of a tree called Nyper. Whose liquour they distill, and so make an excellent drinke cleare as christall, good to the mouth, and better to the stomake,"* He goes on to speak of the medicinal virtues of this excellent wine in glowing terms and with a wealth of detail which, although interesting, make the passage somewhat unsuitable for inclusion in this paper.

Following upon the Portuguese came the Dutch, who, as Mr. Blankwaardt surmises in his excellent article in *L'Eveil Economique*, (November 1921), had probably visited Siam either on their own account or in the service of the Portuguese towards the end of the sixteenth century. Mr. Blankwaardt records that in 1601 van Neck made a contract with the queen of Patani concerning commerce

*Hakluyt's Voyages.

in pepper and the establishment of a factory. In 1603 van der Leek and van Waarwyck had visited Ayuthia. As a result of the latter visit the King of Siam decided to send an embassy to Holland; and in 1607 a party of four "mandarins" and minor officials sailed for Holland — the first Siamese to visit Europe.

In 1610 the Dutch had a station in Ayuthia, which was enlarged in 1612, and opened in 1613 by Brouwer. Dutch establishments were also set up at Junk Ceylon, Ligor, and Singora, principally for the trade in tin — the Ayuthia establishment dealing mainly in hides and sappan wood for the Japanese trade.

The English had become acquainted with Siam before the close of the sixteenth century. In 1518 Master Will Barret records that "Belzuinum Mandalalo comes from Sian."* I take this to be Benzoin.

About 1597 John Davis, whose name is for all time connected with the Arctic, visited the eastern coast of the peninsula. (In 1605 he was killed in Patani Bay in a fight with Japanese pirates). Anderson mentions that "By the end of the sixteenth century Siam (Ayuthia) and Tenasserim had become known in England to merchants generally, as we find them mentioned in Foulke Grevil's report on the memorial submitted to Queen Elizabeth, in 1600, "stating the reasons why English merchants might trade with the "East Indies, especially to such rich kingdoms as were not subject "to the king of Spain and Portugal."

At this period Patani was a flourishing port. It was "resorted to by ships from Surat, Goa, and the Coromandel Coast, and by "junks from China and Japan."* The English established themselves there in 1612. In the same year they had set foot and housed themselves in Ayuthia. Upon arrival at the bar "the native Shah-bandar of the port went down probably to receive King James' "letter, but mainly with an eye to a personal present."* The Shah-bandar was the Customs or port officer; but that is a long time ago! From Ayuthia two Englishmen went to Chiengmai, to trade and to report upon the trading prospects.

* Anderson.

The establishment of both English and Dutch in Siam naturally led to their intrusion upon the Japanese trade. Anderson mentions that in 1617 the *Sea Adventure*, which was piloted by Will Adams, left Ayuthia for Japan with a cargo of 9,000 skins. It was a disastrous voyage: thirty-four of the crew died at sea, and upon the arrival of the ship in Japanese waters there were only twelve men on board able to work.

Visiting Patani now, one is hardly able to realise that, away back in the early seventeenth century, there were between four and five hundred Europeans living there. There is a record of ten Englishmen holding a sort of board meeting in the year 1615 — ten *Nai Hang* in fact — and the inference one draws is that the English colony must have been of considerable size.

It seems that the Europeans must have overestimated the volume of trade which was possible in Siam (the same fault has not been unknown in later days, I believe); and before long affairs began to go badly with the factories. It must be remembered that the western energy was not being applied to increasing production. The traders were solely engaged in buying and selling. Moreover, their activities in this respect were limited. As in other eastern courts the King of Siam was the chief merchant of the country; and commodities bought and sold passed through his hands; and, worse still from the point of view of trade, through the hands of his ministers and officials.

The temptation to intrigue, one nation against another, must therefore have been irresistible. There is no reason to believe that the early European traders bore the high character of their present-day successors; and there is no doubt that Ayuthia must have been a hot-bed of intrigue; with English, Dutch, Portuguese, Japanese, Indian, and Chinese all scheming against each other, and the Siamese officials sitting demurely looking on, and making a very reasonable profit out of the trouble. A dictaphone record of successive conversations between the "Barcalon" and the merchants would be worth listening to.

But it is to these rough mariner-merchants, these quarrelsome and often drunken pioneers, that Siam owes, primarily, the commerce which enables her to-day to stand firmly on her own feet among the

nations of the world. Throughout all the troublous years of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the kingdoms of India, Sumatra, and Java were falling before the advancing tide of western aggression there is hardly a suspicion that the conquest of Siam was ever seriously contemplated. Doubtless to the practical minds of the English and Dutch, bent on trade and trade only, the possible profit was not sufficiently tempting. And, on the whole, considering what trading conditions were in the East, the treatment the traders received was reasonably good.

The quarrels among the merchants reached their height when, in 1618, the English Council at Bantam decided to make war upon the Dutch for the satisfaction of their losses. The English captured on the 5th December the *Black Lion* "a richly laden ship, "with rice, pepper and other commodities from Patani.....In "April 1619, John Jourdain, president of the English factories, returned from the coast of Coromandel, with the two ships the *Hound* "and the *Sampson* to 'new establish, both with men and means, the "almost decayed factories' of Jambi, Patani, Siam, and Succadana... ".....They arrived at Patani in June 1619, to find the factory "disorganised by 'the base and idle carriage' of Edward Gillman... ".....Adam Denton went to the factory with the goods they had "brought, and resided there while the ship lay at anchor in the "harbour. John Jourdain's movements had, however, been carefully "observed by the Dutch, who no sooner knew he was at Patani, with "only two ships, than they sent Henrick Johnson in pursuit of him "with three well-appointed men-of-war, manned by 800 men. On "the 17th July, 1619, this strong naval division sailed into the harbour of Patani, and, taking up its position, at once attacked the "two English vessels. The surprise, however, had not been so "sudden but that the English president might have set sail and "engaged them at sea, where his chances of success might have been "greater; but he disdained to appear to have run before his enemy, "as his doing so might have damaged, in the opinion of the natives, "the reputation his nation had established for courage. He determined, therefore, to fight them in full view of the town, and accordingly never moved from his anchor while they bore down on "him — conduct which one of Jourdain's contemporaries said deser-

“ved ‘favourable censure’, a verdict which every admirer of courage “will accept. After a ‘five glasses fight’, ‘their noble president’ “says Marnaduke Steventon, who fought on board the *Hound*, ‘was “slain in parley’ with the Dutch commander, ‘receiving his death “wound, with a musket, under the heart.’” *

The survivors of this fight were taken prisoner by the Dutch. Their treatment was not all that it might have been, even in a brutal age. It is described fully by Anderson, who also says that the Queen of Patani undertook the protection of the English and their houses — at a price. Generally speaking, everything had a price, in those far-off days.

The trade appears to have shown no signs of improvement; for both the English and Dutch closed their factories in Ayuthia about the year 1623. But the Dutch were back again before 1629. I have obtained some figures of the rates of duty at this period, from *The History of the Second Reign*, by H.R.H. Prince Damrong. There were five methods of securing a revenue from the trade, viz., by

- (1) Fees on passes — permissions to enter for trading. (Ka berk long or ka pak rūa).
- (2) Import duties.
- (3) Export duties.
- (4) Profit from the sale of Government commodities.
- (5) Pre-emption of import cargoes.

It does not appear, nor is it likely, that the trade had diminished. No doubt it had grown to some extent; but the Chinese had secured a firm hold on the eastern traffic, a hold which was strengthened after 1636, when Japan was closed to foreigners; and the trade of Mergui and Tenasserim was probably carried largely first by Indian craft and later by Company's ships from Masulipatam and Madras. The Company's factory at Madras was established in 1639.

About 1660 trade seems to have improved, and the English factory in Ayuthia was re-settled in 1662. A letter to Surat describes the goods vendible in the Siam

*Anderson.

market. They are—cloths of various kinds, calicoes, chintzes, loong-bees, and long-cloths. A letter from the authorities at Fort St. George, quoted by Anderson, describes the trade in 1663:—"The Moors supply Siam with goods, which they send *via* Tennassarre, but they carry them 40, dayes by land, and pay severall customes, and are at about 50_pto. and charges more than ye goods yt goe by shipping; soe yt if wee used yt Trade, wee shall quickly beate ym out. The Dutch, it is true lade many shippes from thence, but ye most of them carry provisions for Malacca and Batavia, the rest are employed wth Tynn, Elephants Teeth, Lead, and Sappan Wood, there is alsoe brought unto the place by shipping all sorts of South-Sea come, silk, Gold, and pcs. of $\frac{2}{2}$, Sugr, Dopp. Tuttanague, Amber-Greece, Muske, Agula, Beniamen &c.....when Mr. Blandwell was theire, there was 15 sayll of Dutch shippes, besides their Japan fleete."

At this time the Dutch were more less at war with Siam, although it does not appear that their factory was closed; but in 1664 they concluded a treaty by which the King undertook not to employ any Chinese in his ships going to Japan, and by which, also the Dutch secured a monopoly of the trade in hides, and the King contracted to supply them with 10,000 piculs of sappan wood annually. In this treaty the Dutch attempted to secure freedom for their trade, and from the directness of the language used it is plain that the matter was considered to be one of great importance. "The Honourable Company shall be free to negotiate, deal, and correspond with all persons no matter what rank they occupy whenever the Honourable Company may choose to do so, without, as has happened before, being interfered with either directly or indirectly by anybody whosoever he may be." There is nothing of the language of secret diplomacy about that.

The treaty also furnishes the first reference to extra-territorial jurisdiction in Siam. The clause runs:—"Should (God forbid) any of the Company's residents commit a grave crime in Siam, neither the King nor the Siamese courts shall judge him, but he shall be delivered to the chief of the Honourable Company, in order to be punished according to Dutch law: and in case the said chief himself commit a capital crime, His Majesty shall have power to place

De Choisy mentions the war with Goleconda, and states that Siam had captured a vessel of Goleconda, and that six Siamese vessels had been fitted out and armed, three commanded by Frenchmen, and three by Englishmen.

This embassy was the beginning of the downfall of Phaulkon. I have said that there is hardly a suspicion that the conquest of Siam was ever seriously contemplated. I made that statement in a qualified form because it is by no means certain what was in Phaulkon's mind, or in the minds of Louis XIV and of Colbert. The opinions of the English and Dutch traders are scarcely reliable. After his change of religion Phaulkon ceased to be a friend of either of the great companies; and the English, although at one time they suggested that King Charles should confer a title of honour upon him (the decoration bribe was not unknown then), were particularly bitter because of Phaulkon's former connection with their Company. Whatever were the motives which prompted the chief actors, there can be no doubt that the French mission of de Chaumont, followed by that of de la Loubère in 1687, opening up, apparently, the most glowing prospects, resulted in a disaster which involved not only the French but the whole trading community and the development of the country.

De la Loubère gives an indication of the commercial situation in his time. "The richest of the foreigners, and above all the Moors have withdrawn elsewhere since the King has reserved to himself nearly all the foreign trade. His royal father did the same and perhaps it has been the policy of Siam to act thus from time to time. Nevertheless it is certain that commerce has nearly always been free and that it has often flourished in Siam. Fernand Mandez Pinto says that in his time there came every year more than a thousand foreign vessels; now there are only two or three Dutch barques." He goes on to comment upon the heavy taxation of the people, on the *corvée*, and on the lack of circulation of the money collected as revenue, stating that much of it never returns to the people, but remains in the royal hands.

One result of this state of affairs was that the Indian merchants withdrew to Tenasserim and Mergui, where they had a free field for their trading operations. But Phaulkon resolved to have a

"him under arrest until notice shall have been given of the same
"to the Governor-General."

In 1662 the French made their first appearance in Siam, in the person of the Bishop of B rythe. He was followed, in 1664, by Francis Pallu, Bishop of Heliopolis. The priests made every effort to interest the King in their faith, although they received what Anderson calls "a rude shock" when they found that religion, as well as commerce, is subject to competition—Mohammedan emissaries putting in an appearance in 1668 to urge the claims of their faith.

The Bishop of Heliopolis made a visit to Rome, and returned in 1673 with letters and presents from the Pope and Louis XIV. In 1676 and 1677 more missionaries arrived; and in 1680 came the traders, following their pioneer footsteps.

One does not like to question the motives of these notably good and brave men. Doubtless they were merely pawns moved at the will of the master minds in France, but it is not unreasonable to suppose that the development of Siam might have progressed much more quickly, and on different lines, had not some of these earnest but unpractical men set foot in the country.

A Siamese embassy was sent to France, and in 1685 de Chaumont arrived, to set the seal, as he thought, and as the sanguine de Choisy thought, upon the work of the missionaries. In their company was de Forbin, who remained to command the forces at Bangkok, and whose journal, like that of de Choisy, is interesting reading, if only on account of the simple egotism disclosed. It is quite clear that, like many another hopeful young man who has come to this country, de Forbin imagined that he was destined to sway the rod of empire in Siam; and it is equally clear that he imagined that he possessed the force of character to wrest that rod from the hands of Phaulkon. He was mistaken; he was a man of no character at all, but I am grateful to him for one thing—he has shown me where that old story of the elephant and the tailor—the tailor pricking the inquisitive trunk with his needle, and the annoyed animal passing on to return later with its trunk full of water wherewith to souse the tailor—where that dear old story of our childhood came from. The evidence is incontrovertible because de Forbin saw it happen!

share in it for the King and for himself. He appointed, as Shah-bandar of Mergui, one Samuel White, a Company's servant. In addition to being Customs and port officer White was commercial agent for the King. It would appear that it was not remarkable in those days that a European Customs official should be expected to know something of commercial affairs. But that is a long time ago.

Before this had happened commerce had been growing very difficult in Ayuthia. The English factory had a large sum of money owing to them, and had petitioned, without result, for assistance in collecting the money. A cargo of English woollen manufactures, worth £10,000, arrived in 1681; but its sale does not appear to have helped the Company; for they began to make plans for leaving.

The Company's officers were unreliable — one of them explained away the absence of 500 chests of Japan copper by saying that they had been destroyed by white ants — and the King's officers were obstructive. Merchants were given no consideration; indeed they were imprisoned and pilloried; and things were plainly in a state of grave disorder. It is obvious that the primitive ideas of the court upon commerce were unsuited to the conditions of the trade; and one can see in all this welter of confusion, so prejudicial both to the interests of the country and of the traders, how unavoidable was the development of the safeguards which treaties and laws provide.

Both sides insisted upon the preservation of the monopoly system. As we have seen, the Dutch had secured a monopoly of the hide trade. They held also the privilege of being the sole tin buyers in Ligor, a privilege confirmed to them in 1668, in the ratification of their treaty of 1664. In 1675 the English were given a monopoly in tin in Chaiya, Chumporn, Tattang, and Pompin. Anderson thinks that Tattang is a small island in Chaiya Bay, and Pompin, or Phunphin, is situated on another island in the Bay. He is, I think, wrong. Tattang is Thalang, or Puket; and Pompin is Pang Nga, on the mainland north-east of Puket. The concession was obviously intended to give the English the control of the tin at both ends of the overland routes.

White at Mergui seems to have given most of his attention to naval operations against Golconda. He was soon in trouble, and was recalled to Ayuthia, where he was treated very coldly by

Phaulkon. While he was there the Maccassar rebellion broke out, in which two English captains and four Frenchmen were killed. White returned to Mergui, and the Golconda war was prosecuted until the relations between the English Company and the Siamese became so strained that at last the Company determined to seize Mergui. A ship was sent thither. High-handed action was taken by the English, which aroused the anger of the Siamese; and on the 14th July 1687 the people of Mergui broke bounds, and a massacre of the English ensued — White having the good fortune to make his escape.

De la Loubère arrived in 1687 with a large suite of officers and priests, and 1400 French soldiers commanded by General des Farges. The following year Phaulkon was dead, the French were driven out, and a new King was on the throne. The Dutch alone seem to have come untroubled through those troublous times.

Both English and French seem to have made efforts to resume commercial relationships with Siam, but apparently without any direct results upon trade. Indeed the president at Madras proposed a private subscription war against Siam. That president's name is known all over the world to-day. He was Elihu Yale, after whom Yale University was named.*

Trading conditions were not good. Piracy was only too common in the Indian seas; and it was at this time that the renowned Captain Kidd, sent out to suppress the evil-doers, found piracy so attractive an occupation that he became the worst pirate of them all.

A writer in 1678 gives a detailed account of the commerce of Siam at this time, an account which is to be found as an appendix to Anderson's *English Intercourse*. From this statement we find that the chief products of the country were:—Agilla or eaglewood, areca, sappan, elephants, saltpeter, lead, tin, ivory; "all wch. are engrossed by the King." His Majesty seems to have been content with about two-hundred *per cent.* profit upon his trading.

The "more vulgar commodities wherein all p'sons have liberty to trade" were iron, rice, "jagarah" (palm-sugar), timber, salt, raw hides, and "cheroon". Anderson fails to identify cheroon. It is possible that it may be Karaboon (camphor).†

* Anderson.

† Since this paper was read it has been suggested to me by Mr. Greg that "cheroon" may be the Arabic "Karun" (horn).

The imports were "Rawe and wrought silke, Quick Silver, Tutenague, Porcellaine, Wrought copper, and Iron Pans".

Much of this import trade was not for home consumption but for sale elsewhere. Copper, spelter, and porcelain were, for instance, bartered for calico from Surat and the Coromandel coast.

The shipping consisted of one or two yearly ships to Japan, and Canton, and sometimes to Amoy. A King's ship was sent every year to Manila. Other shipping, excepting two or three vessels owned by other merchants, was in the hands of the Chinese.

The Dutch found their chief profit, at the end of the century, in their tin and hide monopolies, particularly the latter.

The information available concerning Siam's commerce in the eighteenth century is scanty. Conditions were by no means favourable to trade, for during the greater part of the century the country was the battlefield of invading and insurrectionary forces. The possession of Mergui and Tenasserim was lost; and Ayuthia was destroyed. The city where once foreign traders gathered in their hundreds ceased for ever to be a commercial centre. The condition of the country may be imagined from the fact that it was necessary to import rice to feed the people.

That some form of commercial enterprise still remained we know from the Chinese records already quoted; but, generally speaking, the trade of the country must have lain dormant.

With the establishment of peaceful conditions, trade began to awake again; but the European portion of that trade was no longer controlled by the great companies of the past, nor was it — and this is much more important — hampered by their jealousies and intrigues. The trade which was slowly but surely being built up was a fair trade, subject to the ordinary conditions of business competition. The day of monopolist companies had passed. They had served their purpose in a period when private enterprise, far away from the big markets of the world, was an impossibility; and having fulfilled their mission, Time, in the pleasantly casual way he has with his servants, dropped them gently into the stream.

Royal trading continued until the reign of King Phra Nang Klao, who upon his accession announced his intention of not being a "King merchant". I have the particulars, taken from H.R.H.

Prince Damrong's *History of the Second Reign*, of an interesting voyage made by a ship, under Government instruction, in the year 1818. She appears to have sailed from Trang, carrying elephants and tin.

Value	Ticals		Ticals
of Cargo :—Elephants	8862	Cargo sold in India for	
Tin	8430	Elephants	7206
Labour	1958	Tin	10851
	<hr/>		<hr/>
Total	19250	Total	18057
	<hr/>		
		Less — Ka Tamniem	2022
		Wages	1232
			<hr/>
		3254	3254
			<hr/>
		Net total	14803
		A loss of	4447
			<hr/>
			19250
			<hr/>

But the transaction did not stop there. The instructions were to bring back certain white cloth. The Indian merchant, however, was unable to furnish this cloth, and asked that the ship might return for it in the following year; but he supplied four kinds of white cloth of a total value of Ticals 4350.

Washing and Ironing this cloth cost Ticals 457 (the dhobie was doing well). The value of the cargo was, therefore, Ticals 4807. "Therefore," says the letter from which I quote, "the Indian dealer still owes the ship Ticals 9956." (I make the figure Ticals 9996, but the account is near enough to accuracy for our purpose.) And Phya Nakon is ordered to fit out the ship with elephants and tin the next year, to take this debt in cloth.

From a mere outsider's point of view, it seems that it would have been cheaper to bring the ship back light, and cut the loss of the 4447 ticals made on the outward voyage; for it will be observed that the shortage referred to in the letter is not on the capital ex-

"ready money in both cases. The commander furnishes provisions. "A single junk has been known to bring 1200 passengers to Bangkok; and I am told that the annual immigrations into that place "may be moderately estimated at seven thousand."

In 1824 came Hunter, the first British-born merchant to reside in Bangkok. Mr. Adey Moore says that in 1835 Hunter had four vessels annually making voyages for him.

In 1822 the Crawford mission, and in 1825 the Burney mission, came to Bangkok. The latter resulted in the abolition of the heavy duty charges on imports and exports, and substituted a uniform measurement duty — a bad arrangement, but, judging by its effects, a much better one than the system it superseded, undoubtedly because it put an end to the irregular and oppressive assessment of duties. One very important clause in Burney's treaty stipulated that merchants "shall be allowed to buy and sell without the intervention of other persons." In another clause it was stipulated that merchants "shall be protected and permitted to buy and sell with facility." One hundred and fifty years had passed since the Dutch attempted to secure the same reasonable privilege, but still the country had not learned how essential is liberty to trade. It was a very important matter, for, although the King had ceased to be a "King merchant," the right of pre-emption was still claimed and exercised by the Government officials, and trade was very seriously hampered. Crawford mentions that an American ship which came to Bangkok to complete its cargo by taking in a small quantity of sugar, was kept waiting for about six weeks before it was allowed to receive its cargo.

Ruschenberger, the chronicler of the Roberts American Mission of 1836, says that only two American vessels had visited Bangkok in eight years, although at one time there had been at least 2200 tons of American shipping in the trade.

This writer gives particulars of the commerce in his time, although it is not clear whether he is giving figures of production or of foreign commerce. I think much of it is inland traffic.

The principal figures are

Paddy	...	1,696,423	piculs
Teak	...	127,000	trees

penditure, but on the proceeds of the sale, by which, as I have shown, a loss of Ticals 4447 had already been incurred.

It was a poor commercial effort, but a fine example of the folly of government trading; a lesson which the world seems to be slow to learn.

“As it was in the beginning
Is to-day official sinning
And shall be for evermore.”

Crawfurd gives some interesting details of the trade of Bangkok in 1822, putting the whole of the Siam-China trade, carried in about 140 junks, at 561,500 piculs; and the trade with the Straits, Cochin-China, and the Gulf ports, carried in 200 junks, at 450,000 piculs. Outside the junk traffic, commercial intercourse seems to have been negligible, except for a certain amount of trade with Penang by the overland routes.

The land routes to Mergui and Pak Chan were closed to trade after the Burmese conquest, and it is only in the last few years that the last named route has been re-opened as a road. When I crossed it a few years back it was hardly even a track. Fraser crossed it in 1861 and found it rather trying. However he obtained some satisfaction from his exploit, for he records solemnly in his official report that it is “a route quite unknown and has never been traversed by Europeans.”* Apart from the traffic of centuries, an official of his own government — Tremenheere — had crossed and reported upon it only eighteen years before.

Harris, of Burney's embassy, speaks of the still existing traffic between Chaiya and Pung Nga, and on the southern routes, Trang to Nakorn Sritamaraj and Kedah to Singora.

In Crawfurd's time the pepper produced in Siam was estimated at 60,000 piculs; sticklac 16,000 piculs; sappan wood at 30,000; ivory at 1,000; and fine cardamums at 500. Teak was used as formerly in ship-building, but very little was exported. One interesting piece of information given by Crawfurd is that “passengers form the most valuable importation from China to Siam. The rate of passage money between Bangkok and Amoy is eight Spanish dollars, and between Bangkok and Changlin six Spanish dollars —

*“Miscellaneous Papers relating to Indo-China.”

"ready money in both cases. The commander furnishes provisions. "A single junk has been known to bring 1200 passengers to Bangkok; and I am told that the annual immigrations into that place "may be moderately estimated at seven thousand."

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The principal figures are

Paddy	...	1,696,423	piculs
Teak	...	127,000	trees

Sappan wood	...	200,000	piculs
Coconut oil	...	600,000	"
Sugar	...	96,000	"
Palm sugar	...	150,000	jars
Salt	...	8,000	coyans
Pepper	...	38,000	piculs
Cardamums	...	4,550	"
Sticklac	...	8,000	"
Iron	...	20,000	"
Ivory	...	300	"
Gamboge	...	200	"
Deer horns	...	26,000	pairs
Buffalo hides	...	500	pieces
Cow hides	...	100,000	"
Benjamin	...	100	piculs
Dried fish	...	19,000	"
Rosewood	...	200,000	"

But although the treaty appeared to have cleared the way to commercial freedom, affairs were still far from satisfactory. Mr. Adey Moore quotes some of Hunter's troubles; and whether or not Hunter's case was quite as sound as he made it out to be it is apparent that the Government was still far from realising its responsibilities.

Pallegoix records, with eloquent indignation, the great number of monopolies which existed in his day and blames an English Ambassador for suggesting the idea to the King. These monopolies were "farms": and the good bishop probably forgot that France and England had both the same form of revenue collection in the days when their revenue services were still in their infancy. The farm system is always bad, but the Government was at least reaching out for control and had definitely abandoned state trading.

I do not think the Bishop was a sound authority upon commerce. Incidentally he mentions that the measurement duty of 1700 ticals per wah was made expressly to hinder Europeans, and especially the English, in their trading. It was, of course, the rate agreed upon when Burney made his treaty. But the Bishop thinks that a measurement duty by which a cheap cargo paid as much duty

as a valuable one was a very reasonable and even advantageous system. The trading community expressed their opinion in results when the system was changed.

Bowring's treaty of 1856 was the inevitable outcome of the existing state of affairs, and its value may be judged by the remarkable development of Siam's trade since the treaty was made, a development which would not have been possible if the safeguards and assurances provided by the treaty had not been secured. It must not be overlooked, however, that there were other important agencies at work. The treaty was made at a time when the Throne was occupied by an enlightened and enterprising Monarch whose life was devoted with singular faithfulness to the interests of his country. It was a time, also when steam was taking the place of sail (the first steam ship was brought to Bangkok by Hunter in 1843); and cargoes could be carried up and down the Gulf independently of the monsoons. As steam vessels increased, the junk traffic, and with it the Chinese control, diminished. One after another the trading nations of the world — some of them nations which had borne no share of the heat and burden of the pioneer days — copied Bowring's treaty. Consulates were established, and under their shelter, secured from oppression and guaranteed against injury resulting from caprice and corruption, the foreign merchants built up, in a country which was only just beginning to learn the art of good government, the substantial edifice of commercial prosperity which we see to-day.

A comparative appendix shows the growth of Siam's commerce.

Looking back over the history of Siam's commerce, two remarkable features stand out above all others.

The first is that throughout the whole period we are dealing with the same export commodities. The trade has been extended only in quantity, and not in variety. There are few countries of which this can be said; there are few countries which have been so long in contact with trade and have still retained their primitive commercial characteristics. The centuries have added no new products of the soil, produced no new craftsmanship. Furthermore they have not seen the growth of a native commercial community. While the people of Siam have progressed in the art of government and

have developed great ability in directing and controlling official affairs, they have acquired no powers of judgment or application in connection with the affairs of commerce. Their business ability has not risen above the stage of bargaining. The spirit of commerce has passed them by, although the lure of profit has not; and they remain aloof, untaught, and disinclined to learn.

This brings me to my second point, which is that the commercial development of Siam has at all times been in the hands of foreigners. Setting on one side the Royal and official traders, who merely bought and sold commodities which their power enabled them to control, it is a startling fact that the trading houses have always been foreign, and that even the ships, built in Siam of Siamese timber, and carrying Siamese produce, have been manned and piloted almost entirely by foreigners—Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and European.*

I cannot close without inviting you to think of the men to whom Siam owes its emergence from the obscurity of a veiled Eastern existence; those rough-tongued, hard-living merchant adventurers of the West, who, attracted by the hope of glory as well as by the lust of gain, set out in their small craft across the uncharted seas, fearful of dangers natural and supernatural, yet daring all.

There are great names among them, names which have come down through the centuries, and will pass on to future generations; great names whose lustre is reflected on this country.

Their bones lie on the sea-floors of these coasts, and in the grass-grown forgotten corners of sleepy townships; but their work stands.

* Note:—During the last few years a beginning has been attempted with a Siamese-manned commercial fleet. The development of this enterprise will be watched by all with sympathetic interest.

Appendix.

Comparison of Trade Figures at different periods during the last seventy years. The figures for 1850 are those given by Mgr. Pallegoix. They do not appear to be at all reliable, many of them being obviously overestimated.

The figures for 1919-20 are not the latest available, but that year is taken as the last year of comparatively normal trade except for the Rice exports.

PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES.	1850.	1892.	1901.	1919-20.
Agilla Wood	Pels. 6,000	Pels. 475	Pels. 703	Pels. 1,072
Benzoin	" 200	" 537	" 168	" 74
Cardamoms	" 6,700	" 2,970	" 2,437	" 5,365
Cocunut Oil	" 700,000	" ..	" ..	" ..
Cotton	Bales 200,000	" 3,732	" 5,331	" 6,423
Fish	Pels. 190,000	" 119,154	" 277,201	" 156,729
Gamboge	" 600	" 282	" 45	" 649
Hides—Buffalo and Cow	Skins 120,000	" 19,224	" 19,494	" 60,270
" Deer	" ..	{ Skins 13,424 Pels. 7,682	{ Skins 15,952 Pels. 60,308	Skins 215,658
Horns—Deer	Pairs 30,000	{ Pairs 1,472 Pels. 404	{ Pairs 2,120 Pels. 412	{ Pairs 250 Pels. 331
Indigo	Pots 60,000	" ..	" 1	" ..
Iron	Pels. 20,000	" ..	" ..	" ..
Ivory	" 500	" 45	" 58	" 17
Pepper	" 70,000	" 19,737	" 19,424	" 16,544
Rice	Coyans 15,000,000*	" 3,426,786	" 11,516,731	" 7,409,453†
Salt	" 12,000	" 16,698	" 35,085	" 1,048,802
Sappan Wood	Pels. 500,000,	" 34,314	" 13,222	" 61,111
Sticklac	" 11,000	" 4,351	" 9,831	" 17,863
Sugar	" 250,000	" 454	" 17	" 71,775
" Palm	Jars 180,000	" ..	" ..	" ..
Teak	Trees 130,000	{ Tons 11,444 Pels. 8,394	{ Tons 38,507 Pels. 60,688	Tons 70,202

Total Value of Trade:—

Imports ...

Exports ...

1892.	1901.	1919-20.
£	£	£
1,338,462	2,893,032	12,272,968
1,431,936	4,589,222	15,718,170

* This figure is plainly absurd.

† Average export in normal years = Pels. 18,000,000.

